Fire in AIIMS

491. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a fire broke out in the X-ray department of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi on the 22nd June, 2006;

(b) if so, the cause thereof and extent of loss suffered thereby;

(c) whether any inquriy into the mishap has been conducted;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that such mishaps do not recur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (e) On 23.6.06, fire broke out in one part of Cardio-Thoracic Centre of AIIMS due to electric short circuit. The extent of loss is being assessed.

Adverse effects of mobile phones

492. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that rays/waves of the radio broadcast, T.V. and mobile phones can cross all protections;

(b) if so, how far these rays/waves have created troubles/diseases to the public in the country;

(c) whether it has come to the notice that use of mobile phones at the time of the thundering of clouds can be fatal for users; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government for the protection of the public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) According

to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) radiation from mobile phone towers and other electronic devices has been engaging the attention of the Government for quiet some time. Based on the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Karma Jyot Sewa Trust of Gujarat, Mumbai High Court had ordered the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India to examine the issue on health hazards due to mobile phone base stations. As a follow up of Mumbai High Courts' directions, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) comprising the doctors from the leading scientific institutions *viz* All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh and also including a representative of Department of Telecommunication. The Committee met on 29th May, 2006 and opined that overall there is not enough evidence to show direct health hazards of radio frequency exposure from mobile base stations. The Committee recommended that a precautionary approach needs to be adopted till further research data is available. It would not be amiss to adopt the International Council for Non-ionizing, Radiation protection guidelines for limiting electronic magnetic force exposures.

In recent issue of British Medical Journal some doctors have warned against the outdoor use of devices like cell phone during stormy weather. The Australian Lightning Protection Standard also recommends that metallic objects, including cordless or mobile phones should not be used.

Ministry of Telecommunication has set up multi-disciplinary Committee to examine the issue of adopting International Guidelines for Electro-Magnetic Force Exposure.

According to Ministry of Telecommunication, this Committee is expected to prepare precautionary guidelines for protection of public from electro magnetic radiation from mobiles towers and mobile phones within time frame of four months.